

[George S. Stiers]

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Folkstuff - Pony express rider & range lore [30?]

Gauthier, Sheldon F

Rangelore.

Tarrant Co., Dist., #7

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George S Stiers, 73, living at the County Home Tarrant Co, Tex, was born on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, So Dak, Jan 8, 1864.

His father was Canadian-French and his mother a Souix Indian. Her maiden names was [Wabasha?] (Wolf) and a granddaughter of Sitting Bull.

Stier's mother followed the Indian custom of naming the children after the mother and named her child Telle Wabasha (Red Wolf) which name he used until he left the reservation to work with white people at the age of 15. Then he adopted his father's name of Stiers.

He attended the Catholic Mission school, conducted by the Sisters on the reservation, for a period of eight years.

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At the age of 15 he went to Fort Dodge (now Dodge City) Kans, and was employed as a rider for the Pony Express during the years 1879-80-81. [Will?] (Buffalo Bill) Cody signed the \$1000 bond required to be given by the riders of the Pony Express.

He quit riding for the Pony Express in 1881, and entered the Government Scout service which he followed until 1894. After he quit Scouting he went to Texas and worked as a cowhand for the 'JA' ranch and several other. He spent several years in Tex, then returned North going to Colorado where he worked on the [Chouvenott?] Range for the Eddy Brothers.

Stiers quit the range life in 1891 and joined the Buffalo Bill circus with which he remained for six years doing a riding and shooting act. Following his circus career he joined [Wm S?] Hart and worked with him in the production of the two reel Western pictures for a period of seven years. He then worked on the vaudeville circuit until 10 years ago.

His story of range life follows:

"I was born Jan 8th, 1864 on the Pine Ridge Reservation of So Dak. My mother named me Telle Wabasha, which are the Indian words for Red Wolf. The Indian custom was to name the child after the mother. My mother was a Souix Indian and a grand-daughter of Chief Sitting Bull. Her mother was the Chief's daughter. My father was Canadian-French.

"I was born in an Indian teepee, reared in a teepee and lived the native life of the Indians until I reached the age of 15. C12 Texas 2 "I attended eight school terms going to the Catholic Mission School conducted by the Sisters. During the spell of time I had on my hands, after attendin classes, I spent riding ponys, fishing, hunting and playing with other children of my age.

"We had plenty of food at all times. There was lots of wild game which gave us meat and in addition the Government supplied food and some clothing. Most of our clothing was

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made from hides and which was suitable clothing for the climate. It was a life lived close to nature and agreed with me. I was [as?] tough as a piece of rawhide.

“When I reached the age of 16, I hankered to get away from the reservation and see some of the country. I talked to matter over with my father and he agreed that I had a good idea. He suggested that I go to Fort Dodge (now Dodge City) he knew [WM?] (Buffalo Bill) Cody and told me to hunt him up. He said that Bill would help me find something to do. That was in 1879, and when I told what I had on my mind he said that the Pony Express people could use a good rider, one that could stand hard riding, was not yellow and could shoot fast and straight.

“I told him I could ride fast and stand up under [hard?] going, could shoot fast and straight and did not think I was yellow. It was necessary to give a \$1000 bond before I could go to work. Cody recommended me and went on my bond. That started me on a three year spell as a rider for the Pony Express. My trail was between Fort Dodge and Wichita Kans. The Pony Express carried registered mail and there was considerable valuable money in our care. It was the fast method 3 of that day, like the airplane is today.

“The distance was a trifle over 100 miles and we rode/ it in ten hours. There were 12 change stations, located about 8 miles apart, where we changed hosses. The hosses were the best that money could buy for the purpose all of the Steel [Dust?] racing stock. We put the critters over the road at their best stride every foot of the way. Our orders were not to stop for anything, unless it was absolutely necessary. A fresh hoss was always ready and waiting when we arrived at a station. All the rider did was to dismount and remount the fresh hoss as quick as possible. There was no stopping for meals or water. I carried a snack and a canteen of water and what eating or drinking I did was done on the hoss a-running.

“During the three years I rode I had two holdups and bested the robbers each time. The second holdup caused Bill Cody/ to have me pull off. He told me that he was responsible

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for me getting on the ride and would be responsible for taking me off, that if I didn't quit he would pull down his bond, because he didn't want me to get killed. Because of the way he felt about the matter I quit and that ended Red Wolf's riding on the Pony Express.

"I shall give you a little chinning about what happened in those two holdups.

"The first one, I was sort of expecting. Just before I was ready to hit the trail out of Wichita. I was three men leave headed [West?] over the trail and I had a hunch that they were going to stick me up. They were dressed like rawhides, but didn' act like it. They kept their eyes peeled on me too much. The country was full of cattle and rawhides could be seen on every hand, but some way I could tell the 4 the real from the phoney.

"That day when I saw them fellows [eving?] me I sez to myself, 'I am in for some trouble, them fellows will stick me up at the [waterhole?]. The waterhole was about four miles out of town. I was armed with a rifle and two good six-guns. I run ideas through my head how to out-smart the boys in case they tried to stop me and an idea came to my mind, which I carried out and saved the valuables.

"As I came over the trail, riding some what careful, I suddenly spied the boys at the side of the road, near the waterhole behind some buffalo grass. They drove out to the road and drew their guns and yelled 'reach high'. I reached high and at the same moment drove the [g t?] hooks into the hoss and threw myself to the opposit, right, side of the hoss. I hooked my left spur in the [?] and held to the rein with my left hand and rode on. Of course just as soon as I put the gut hooks to the hoss it went to kicking dirt. That act took the boys by surprise and before they got their mind to [work'ng?] on the next move I was 50 yards down the road. That is when they started to throw lead. I still was protected by the hoss. I could hear the bullets whistle, but that was the only contact I had with the lead. By the time they got their hosses under-way Red Wolf was a good 100 yards down the trail.

"They tried to catch me, but it was impossible, because my hoss had the speed and was fresh. As I [came?] in sight of the change station, about five miles yonder down the trail I

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gave the trouble sign. That was [?] waving my hat to the right and [?]. I knew the boys 5 would be ready for the three would be robbers. Each station was well provided with arms and each [?] was a dead shoot. When the robbers saw what I was doing they turned and hit across the country.

“The second did not turn out so well for me, but I was not robbed. That time I was not expecting a stickup, of course we were always on the lookout for robbers. I was riding into Fort Dodge and had about [11?] miles to go and one more change to make three miles ahead. A fellow suddenly jumped [me?] from behind a bunch of buffalo grass about 15 yards ahead of me and yelled 'reach high!' I reached and slowed my hoss, but as I got close to the fellow I threw myself forward onto the [hoss's?] neck and at the same time put the gut hooks to it. My hoss reared and leaped forward and at the moment t the fellow shot. The hoss hit the bandit knocking him down and the bullet hit me. It parted my hair striking me at the top of the forehead, where that scar is, and skirted back off of my head.

“The last thing I remembered was the hoss rearing and hearing the shot. When I came to my senses I was in the post hospital at Fort Dodge. The boys at the change station, three miles down the rode, told me I came in riding at top speed laying forward and hanging to the saddle horn with one hand and the mane of the hoss with the other. That I had blood all over me and the front of the hoss and held such a tight grip they had to pry my hands loose.

“I stayed in the hospital for five days and then was out again as good as ever, except for a sore spot on my head.

“Buffalo Bill came to see me while I was in the hospital and 6 had a talk with me about quitting. I was not much stuck on the idea of [quitting?]. I sort of hankered after the job. To me it was the real thing and gave me excitement. But Bill sez, 'Boy I got you into this and am going to get you out before you get cut down. I am going to t take down the bond if you dont quit of your own accord'.

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"That left nothing to do but quit or find another bondsman. Bill had proved to be such a good friend and I sort of wanted to do as he said, so quit.

"It hurt my feelings to quit, because the work was real pleasure to me. Out side of the stickups my troubles as a Pony Express rider was confined to the weather. No weather was suposed to be so bad that a Pony Express rider could not go through it. Ordinary storms did not interfere, but the blizzardsgave us troubles. The worst time I had was in the late spring that kept me out all day and night to make the drive. The wind was high and the snow coming down in sheets. At times I could not see the hoss's head and as for seeing the trail that was impossible. If we got off the trail and missed a station would mean to be lost and the hoss would soon tucker out leaving us at the mercy of the storm. I did not try to guide the hosses, but left the animals to go theur their way and each hoss took me to the station ahead. When I arrived at Fort Dodge I was covered with ice and snow, but still able to go one if necessary.

"When I quit the Pomy Pony Express Bill took me to Fort [?] and registered me inthe Federal Scout service, in which I served for six years. The first part of my Scout service was scouting for the emigrant trains traveling through the country. We scouted for trouble and guides, also protected the trains at night. " The emigrants would put their wagons in a circle when they 7 camped at night and sleptinside of the circle. We Scouts would ride the circle all night doing a three hour shift.

"When I joined the Scout service the Indian trouble was about over with through that section of the country. Therefore, I was lucky in not being called upon to do any fighting. There were several times that it looked like we were in for trouble, but it never came to [a?] fight because the raiders figured we were too much for them. The danger that the emigrants were faced with crossing that country was being [raided?], by both Indians and whites, as [History recores?] many lost their lives and property. I have seen many remains of the slaughter suffered by emigrants.

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"The [laterpart?] of my Scout work was watching for bandits and the most exciting time I had doing that work concerned Buffalo Bill. I came to a rise just about sundown and looking off a distance I saw [dust?], which told me it was from [?] number of hosses traveling and was sure it was a party of Indians. I hit for the dust and by the time I reached the trail it was dusk. The number of tracks showed there were about 50 in the party. I decided to see what it was all about and hit to follow it. I followed it about five miles and then sighted a fire. Upon reaching the fire I saw where there were several fires recently put out and one left burning next to a hole in the side of a hill.

"Something urged me to look into the hole. I [crawled?] in and came in contact with a body, then I took hold of the leg and dragged it out into the open. [By?] that time my lungs and eye were full of smoke and I was choking and blinded. When I got my wind and eyes cleared there laying at my feet was my friend Buffalo Bill. He wore his hair and beard long and it was black.

"The one side of his head and face was burned. No sign of life was indicated. I cupped my mouth over his and blew air into his lungs and sucked it out again. I kept that up for several minutes and was about to give up when I felt a muscle twitch. I sez, 'Thank God he is not dead.' Then I went to work in earnest and in a little while he began to breath. In 15 minutes or so he was sitting up.

"He was plenty pale around the gills and weak. I knew that the Indians had put Bill in that shape, but was curious to know why they did not put a finish on the job. [I sez?], 'Bill, who did this and what has happened?'. He tried to talk, but was unable to say a word and was trying hard. Finally he got out, 'hunt- ing pa-r-ty. Win-be-go', was all that he could say.

"I put him on my hoss and took him to Fort [Hanie?], which was the nearest post. By the time we reached the post he was feeling tolerably well and in a couple days was pert again, except for the tender spot when the beard and hair had been burned.

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"He told me what took place. He was dragging into Fort [Hanicano?] came across the Indian hunting party. He was not expecting anything to happen and they took by surprise, caught and tied him. They calculated on revenging an old grudge held against him for killing Cheif Yellow Hammer, in a fight, when he was with General Miles in 1876.

"The Indians took him to their camp and I reckon were bent on killing him, but must have sounded the ground and heard me a-coming. So that you may know what is ment by sounding the ground, I may as well tell now. In an open where it is still, you can place a piece 9 of light weigh cloth on the ground, and put your ear on the cloth, you willbe able to hear the approach of a hoss for several miles off, at least long before you can see it, or hear it, without sounding.

"Knowing something about Indian habits and customs, I reckoned they wanted to know for sure no one would drop in on them while they were putting the brand on Bill. They knew it would go hard on them if caught in the act. Therefore, when they heard me a-coming they decided to put him in the hole and smother him to death. If he was found it would look like an accident and the chances was against finding him.

"I base my reckoning on the on the fact that Bill sez, 'They suddenly changed tactics and with haste pushed me in the hole, tied as I was, then [?]. Therefore, Wolf I am living my life, [??] breathing your air'. He always called me Wolf, or Wabasha, although I had taken my father's name when I registered in the Scout service. Many times in the after years, he would tell me 'Wolf, I am living my life, but breathing your air'. Insert [A?]

"During the time I rode for the Pony Express and did Scout duity, I saw lots of cattle and cowhands, because that section of the country was loaded with critters on the range. That is where water holes existed. Seeing the cowhands and watching them work caused me the get a hankering for the cattle bus'ness. I had heard of Charley Goodnight's [range?] and decided to drag for Texas, and I lit in West Texas on the old [?]. It belong to Goodnight and Adair. I joined the outfit in 1878.

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"I stayed in the cattle work for a spell of years and 10 worked for a number of outfits, but the JA was one of the best outfits I connected with. It was next to the Eddy outfit up in Colorado.

"No matter where I went, and I have been over a tolerable lot of the country, here and foreign countries too. Wherever the name of Goodnight was mentioned in connection with the West and the cattle business, the boys would off their conk cover to Goodnight. They all agreed that he knew more about cows, knew more about the West than is in the books. He was square as a man can be made and was game from the toes up to the top of his conk.

"Goodnight had the top rawhides working for him and a square bunch. He would not keep a crook or a drinking man around the place. There was Johny-Come Lately, the cooky, a real camp belly-cheater. He was a sour-dough and whistle-berry artist. John Mann, the wagon boss was reckoned by everybody as the top in his line. Jack Campbell, the trail boss another top hand. There was Jim Own, Jim Mitchell, Club Foot Jack, Jess Steen and Ed Jones, part Cherokee Indian, that now lives in Fort Worth some where, all them boys were tops.

"I know what I [prattling?] about, because I have seen them all. Top hands that made their living showing their ability to the public and the JA boys runs along with the best and all had what it takes to make a cowhand [md] guts.

"I want to cite an incident that took place with a bunch of us JA waddies. A few of us were given riding orders to work 11 a round-up near [Mobeetie?], which is North by East from the main ranch. In them days Mobeetie was talked about as holding some of the toughest of the tough buckaroos. Fellows that lived on gambling and anything else that they could find to do, that did not call for muscle action.

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"Bud Roberst had a buckskin hoss that looked like a chunk of dog meat rolled in some hoss hide, but it had the running works and the guts to do it. There were several hosses around there that folks thought could run and we had several races during the spell we stayed there getting the herd together. Sleepy, that was the name of Bud's hoss, was pitted against the hosses that the gamblers/ had for the purpose of taking in the rawhides. I rode Sleepy for Bud, because I was a light weight and knew how to help a hoss do its best. I learned that while still a kid on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Well, Sleepy and I took the jack away from the gamblers. In all the dozen, or so, races that we had there I never lost one. We just kept the gamblers bringing on better hosses trying to get their money back. I never drove Sleepy faster than necessary to stay in front about a lenght. It was a hoss that could pick up speed fast, so I was playing safe if the other hoss showed a sudden burst of speed. I knew that Sleepy could take it away.

"The time came when we were ready to drift the cattle to headquarters and still had the gamblers jack in our pants. That hurt the gamblers pride. He got the wind that they were going to interfere with our herd, claiming critters in it for an excuse to pick a fight and stick us up. 12 We were about ready to start the herd at sun in the morning when a party of men on hosses came claiming that we had some of their critters in the herd and insisted that they were going to cut them out. The critters were all pure and we knew it. Goodnight would make every mother's son of us hit the drag if we came in with any outhier kind.

"Jim Mitchell paid them no mind, just as though they were a bunch of buzzards and went on about his work and yelled drifting orders. Club Foot Jack, was sitting on [his hoss?] sort of lop sided, so he could face the gamblers, chewing on a hunk of '[bacco?]. He squinted one eye and squarted a gob of juice then said: 'Any of ye [buckeroos?] that are hankering for to be branded for the [eternal?] range just move towards them critters. We are hankering for ye to start. The first skunk that starts will get branded sure as hell!'

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"Not a move was made by the gambling gentry and the herd drifted slowly out on the trail. That incident will give you a good idea what kind of men was with the JA outfit.

"The hardest going I had on the JA was laying out watching for rustlers. There was a spell when the gentry were quite pert with their work gathering critters with the other fellow's brand. During one of these times I layed out all night when it was sleeting. My cover was a blanket and a slicker over that. I arose at the end of my shift with an inch of ice all over. [When?] I got up it cracked and tumbled off of me, but I was as warm as a piece of toast inside of that shell. Rustlers were made sort of quick work of in those days. What was done when they were caught with 13 rustled critters would be to hang them op up to dry and if there was no limb handy they would be given a short course in citizenship. I have seen several with bullet holes in the bodies and the buzzards having a good feed.

"About the feed we waddies lived on I can say that it was plenty and the [?] that puts leaf lard on the slats. It was mostly beef off of a fat yearling and some wild game the boys would kill, then there was the sourdough bread and beans, syrup, black coffee, dried fruit and some vegetables out of the can. [Goodnight?] called for the best from his hands and he gave them the best he could in return. He always paid top wages. I recived \$35 a month for work that most of the outfits paid only \$30 for.

"One more incident about the JA before I quit [chinning?] about it. That incident is on myself. When I joined the outfit I was not wise to all the tricks of the wild range critters. One day I came upon a bunch of sagehens, where they were nesting, and decided to ave have some eggs. Eggs were a scarce article in the range assortment of chuck and I sort of hankered for some. I had gathered about two dozen and placed them in my hat when I looked up and saw a wild steer making for me. It was either shot the critter or make for my hoss. I made for the hoss slapping the hat into the saddle and in doing that the eggs spilled all over the seat and of course broke. I had no time to clean the saddle so had a short ride on a slick saddle. Wehn I got to where I could give the matter attention I was full of sticky eggs down my legs and yellow in color. 14 From then on the boys called me Cheif

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Yellow Leg. So if you run across any of the old boys of the JA and they talk about Yellow Leg, this is the man.

"That taught me to stay on my hoss when around a wild steer they would most likely tackle a man on foot, but would run from a man on a hoss unless cornered.

"When I quit the JA I went to Charley Goodnight and told him, I am quitting and saying goodbye to a square outfit'. He held my hand for a minute and then sez, 'Cheif, I am saying goodbye to a good Indian and I don't mean a dead one'. You can light here any time you jiggle through'.

"I then jiggled out to the Pecos country working first for one and then another outfit. That country was some tough and after my spell with the JA outfit the Pesco style did not set well with me. The rangers were in there trying to clean it up and had been for quite a spell. The folks took the matter as sort of a joke. They would tell as a joke that the rangers cleared the range of bad men in a certain section and had them all rounded up. When they tried to get a jury to try the men, on one charge and so another, there was not enough other folks left to form a jury.

"I wanted to see the country so became a saddle bum, a chuck line rider, for a spell. Them days it was no trouble to live and line your flue just going from one outfit to another. Any place you would stop the first thing the ramrod would say was, 'Light and cool your saddle and line your flue'. One could stay a good spell and be welcome.

"After a year as a cattle bum I hit for Colorado and there 15 joined the [?] Brand outfit, sometimes called the Chauvenett range. It was located along the Chauvenett Mountains and owned by the Eddy brothers. Their headquarters was located/ at Selidell. Their brand was called the year brand, because they branded the year when the critters was branded on the side of the [?]. We will say it is 1885. The 1 would be placed on the hip, the two 8's on the ribs and the 5 on the jaw.

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"That was the biggest outfit I have ever seen. I calculate they run as many as 100,000 head on that range. In order and management it was like the Goodnight outfit. I nested there for 10 years. and was one of about 100 waddies connected with the ranch.

"We had a large bunkhouse to sleep in when not out on the range too far to get in. There was a big shed with long tables where we sit down to line our flue. Pat ([?]) Lawson was the cheif cook and a good [belly?] cheater, who spent years with the outfit. He always went with the chuck-wagon and left his helpers at the main joint.

"That was a nice vountry country to work in during the summer, but the winters often took the silver out of your cloud. Bud McDonald was the top-screw and a square shooter, which help in a time of a bad spell of weather. He would not ask us waddies to go when he would not. He always was with us in times of trouble. When a cold spell of weather hit he would sent canteens of hot, thick, black coffee to the night riders. Curley Lawson would stay up all night fix'ng coffee when a real bad spell was a busting. When the riders came in off their shifts there was a 16 snak and all the hot coffee one wanted waiting. the "There were times in that country that we had to keep the critters mill'ng or a lot would be lost from freezing. Hardly a winter pasted without a loss from the weather. Between 3 A.M. and sun up was the worst time for the night rider. It is at that time the cold is [?] the worst.

"My worst stampede experience was on the Year outfit and in a cold spell during the last year I was there.

"It was sultry all day and we reckoned on a buster rolling in on us and we reckoned right. It was about two hours by sun when the weather started to drop fast to around zero with a fast wind. I can see that herd now, in my mind's eye, there must have been 5,000 in that bunch I was with. Looking over the critters, just before dusk, I could see a great fog raising from the cattle that was coming from the heat of their bodies and breath. There was ice forming and settling on their backs. My eyelids and beard was taking on ice so fast that I could not hardly keep my peepers open.

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"Bud McDonald gave riding orders and extra hands came on to help keep the herd moving instead of bedding down. By milling the outside critters are constantly being worked to the center, there the body heat of the critters helps to keep the animals warm, also, the moving helps. A lobo, or some other kind of animal must have dashed into the herd to pull down a calf and started the bunch and about that time snow began to fall and drift with the heavy wind. In a short spell of time it was a howling blizzard and the critters on the storm. Bud at the start told us to not to spend too much time trying to turn the critters, but stay with the herd and keep it from scattering as much as possible. There was no way to tell where the herd was, in just a short time after the snow started, we had to judge from the clask of the horns and the stomping of the feet. The storm kept getting worst and the critters kept running. We had no trouble keeping them warm that night.

"We waddies could not see where each other were and would shoot and wait for an answer, sometimes I would get an answer and again I would not. That was the worst blizzard I saw in that country and the critters just kept running until they run down and could not go any more. It was one of them storms where if a fellow lost the herd it would be a long chance of finding it again and get lost, or if the hoss went down and broke a leg there one would be.

"That herd began to tucker in about an hour to a slow gate, but the weather was so bad we could not work the herd. The animals finely stopped running and all we could do was circle herd, trying to keep it bunched until daylight. Then we headed it back to the grazing grounds.

"It was still storming, but slacking quite pert and by noon it was all over and the sun shining bright. Then we took reckoning and, of course found that a lot of the critters were missing and three of the rawhides were out. Two of the boys were not found until spring when the snow went off. What happened is not known. They may have got strayed and did not know how to take care of themselves, or they may have taken a spill and hurt so they were helpless. About, the middle of the afternoon 18 Texas [Slim?] came dragging in pert as a

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snow bird, he was the other missing waddy. He made his report saying: 'Well boys I got strayed following what I thought was the herd and it was a bunch of 25 or so. So I just rolled up in a snow bank to keep warm until the old heater showed out from behind the clouds'.

"When we hit the chuck line after that spell, bing out all night and till noon without nothing but Spanish suppers for food, we gave the belly-cheater plenty to do. [?] was ready with son-of-a-gun stew and coffee, after we lined our flue we were ready for some shut-eye.

"The bunch of waddies on the Year Brand outfit were a great bunch and a good many of them wnet to the top in their line of ability.

"B.C. Gray, as a roper was equal to Booger Red. It was hard to say which was the best. Bud McDonald, the foreman was the top rider and Texas Slim was right with him. McDonald, Slim and Yak Chinook all made records as riders. McDonald held the championship for a spell. Slim took it away from him and Yak took it from him. Texas Slim and I were the best shoots on the outfit and it was a tussle between us.

"The bunch of us worked with Buffalo Bill's show in later years. O.B. Gray was one of the featured shots working with Annie Oakley. He and her married while with the show. I was also featured shot and rider. Indian Chief Wolf, was what I was billed under. My best shot was to throw two glass [bells?] in the air shot one while up and wait for the other to drop to about three feet of the ground, then drop my gun and get it. Also, 19 I would flip a quarter dollar, phoney of course, in the air and make it disappear. A glass [ball?], which is rosin, will break and fall, but a coin goes out of sight with the bullet.

"I joined Bill's show in 1891, and stayed with him eight years. I spent my winters at this North Platt ranch. I took his big sign for what it said. On the roof of his barn was painted 'Scouts rest. Welcome" and bill ment it all old timers of the range and the west could come and stay as long as they pleased.

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"After I quit Bill's show I went to Los Angles and joined [Wm.S.Bart?] in the production of his two reel Western pictures. I did riding and cowboy stuff, also shooting. / I stayed with Hart until he quit production, then I went on the vauderville circuit playing the West, [North?] and Eastern time then the vauderville played out and that ended my active career.

"All I do now is sit here visiting with the other old men and look at them [picturs?] which gets me to dreaming of the past. I think of the old boys in their play and stories they would tell sitting around the camp fire. 1 Insert A

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"After Bill Cody recovered from his Indian experience, he and I were sitting in the shade of a building talking of first one thing and another. I finally sez to Bill, "Tell me the details of the deal which caused them Indians to hold a grudge against you " .

"He was whittling on a stick and didn't say a word for a few minutes, then turned to me and sez, "I have not hankered to spell about that fight. It was not just according to Army regulations. I will tell you Chief, because I am living my life, but breathing your air. You will be the first to hear what happened and to know about it from my lips. So he lit in and gave me this story:

"I was with General Miles in 76. The [Winnebegosundder?] Chief Yellow Hammer had left the reservation and we were hunting the band. We located them and they started to battle at once. Our cavalry could [anigilate?] [anihilate?] the Indians, because as you know, we

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had better guns, and as a whole were better shots. We also had them cornered. After fighting for a short time General Miles decided to stop the slaughter if he could. We had the Winnebagos corned and there was not a chance for them to escape.

“General Miles raised a white flag which was for the purpose of calling a truce and holding a parley. Firing stopped and the General advanced half way between the two lines at the same time gave the signs that he wanted a parley. Chief Yellow Hammer came to meet him.

“Miles sez to the Chief, 'Chief you see all my braves 2 back there they are many in numbers and many more can be called here. We can kill all your braves. I ask you to sign a treaty and take your braves back to the reservation and save their lives.'

“The chief answered and said: 'No Chief Yellow Hammer take oath on blood knife, no more sign white man treaty. Me save my braves. You find an kill me. “Chief take Yellow Hammer place him sign treaty. Me no sign.'

“General Miles was placed in a position of deciding whether to continue the fighting and kill the Winnebagos, or take a chance of reducing the casualties to one man. Miles decided to accept, if there was no other way out. So again he urged Yellow Hammer to accept the proposition of signing a treaty, but the Chief just repeated his position and called for someone to kill him and then his successor would sign.

“Alright Chief if that is the way you want to do". Miles answered him. ""You pick the man that you want to do the killing"".

“I fight em", the Chief said pointing to me.

“Miles turned to me and said, “Bill he has picked you and not kill him, but to fight it out to death. That is not quite what I had in mind”.

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"I said to Miles," I am placed in apposition where I can't afford to refuse to meet him. To do so would brand me as a coward. Ask him how he wants to fight."

"I was thinking about shooting [?????] 3 desired to find out the distance that he wanted to shoot and to agree on the signal. "Miles turned to Yellow Hammer and asked him how he wanted to fight. Yellow Hammer raised his bowie knife and said, "Fight 'em knife". "That was unexpected and a little out of my line, but I was in a hole and could not afford to back down, so we prepared for action. "We dismounted and the Chief stripped to his waist. I did the same, then with our knives in hand we advanced to meet each other. When we met we raised our knife hands in the air and crossed knives standing face to face waiting for General Miles to give the word "go". "Chief Yellow Hammer was a man every bit my size and hard as rock and with nerve of steel. All his braves stood back away from where we were and our soldiers did the same, but all could watch the struggle. When the Chief and I were in position Miles inquired if we were ready. The Chief grunted and I said "yes". Immediately Miles give the go sign and we were at it. "We spared for an opening, hooked and locked knives, time and again trying to put each other off balance so a thrust could be made. I would back away sidestep, [foint?] trying to pull him into a position so that I could drive my knife into him. The Chief was good and [met?] my moves and in fact kept me about as busy meeting his moves as I was keeping him. One thrust after another were blocked and neither of us could get in a telling blow, except 4 for slight flesh wounds neither of us were hurt after 15 minutes of battle. Each of us were covered with blood from the numerous cuts and I began to think that my time had come. The fact is he was my equal.

"I decided on a bold move to end the struggle one way or another. One that if I failed, I would be open to a thrust in the back, but if I timed my move correct and succeeded I would have a chance to put in a [telling?] blow.

"[Ilbacked?] away and [feinted?] a dash at him and a stumble, stopping about an arms lenght from him. He failed to catch the [feint?] and as I bent over in the stumble he came

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in with his knife raised for a drive into my back. As he came in I raised, suddenly and unexpected to him, and succeeded in getting a death grip on the wrist of his knife hand. At the same time I threw my weight against him. I found an opening, as I had planed, and drove my knife into his chest. We both went to the ground with me holding that grip on his knife hand. In a few moments I felt his body quiver and I knew that I had him.

“Yellow Hammer kept his word and oath. He gave his life to save his braves rather than sign the treaty. The Winnebagos in that hunting party happened upon me alone and intended to reveng the death of their old Chief.